

REMARKS

In the August 25, 2004 Office Action, all of claims 1-12 stood rejected in view of prior art. No other objections or rejections were made in the Office Action.

Status of Claims and Amendments

In response to the May 5, 2004 Office Action, Applicant has amended the specification and claim 1 and 7 as indicated above, and canceled claims 2-3 and 8-9. Thus, claims 1, 4-7, and 10-12 are pending, with claims 1 and 7 being the only independent claims. Reexamination and reconsideration of the pending claims are respectfully requested in view of the above amendments and the following comments.

Specification

Applicant has amended the specification to provide support for claims 1 and 7 as now amended. Also, Applicant believes that no new matter has been added by this amendment to the specification, because the recitation of the structural relationship between the first and second recessed portions and the cylindrical portion is illustrated in Figure 5 as originally filed. Applicant believes that the specification now complies with 37 CFR §1.71 and §1.75(d)(1).

Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 102

On pages 2-8 of the Office Action, claims 1, 4-7, and 10-12 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Japanese Patent Application Publication No. 10-117644 to Sato et al. ("Sato patent"). Claims 1, 4-7, and 10-12 stand rejected as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,311,913 to Yasui et al. ("Yasui patent"). Claims 1-12 stand rejected as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,637,690 to Matsuda ("Matsuda patent"). Claims 1-12 stand rejected as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,572,042 to Sugawara ("Sugawara patent"). In response, Applicant has amended claims 1 and 7 as presented above.

More specifically, Applicant has amended claims 1 and 7 to clearly recite that the fixed shaft cover includes a cylindrical portion, a conical portion, and a second recessed portion, that the first recessed portion is formed where the conical portion meets the cylindrical portion, and that the first recessed portion is recessed relative to the second recessed portion and the cylindrical portion. This newly added language is disclosed in claims 2-3 and Figure 5 as originally filed. Applicant believes that none of the prior art of record discloses or suggests the arrangement of claims 1 and 7 as now amended.

Sato Patent

The Office Action asserts that the recessed portion 44d corresponds to the first recessed portion of claims 1 and 7. The Office Action acknowledges that the Sato patent does not show the second recessed portion. Applicant also believes that there is no suggestion in the Sato patent to create a second recessed portion as defined in now-amended claims 1 and 7 in the structure of the Sato patent. Thus, Applicant believes that the Sato patent does not disclose or suggest the arrangement of claims 1 and 7.

Yasui Patent

The Office Action on page 5 asserts that the unnumbered concaved portion of the fixed shaft cover 10 of the Yasui patent corresponds to the first recessed portion of claims 1 and 7. The Office Action acknowledges that the Yasui patent does not show the second recessed portion. Applicant also believes that there is no suggestion in the Yasui patent to create a second recessed portion as defined in now-amended claims 1 and 7 in the structure of the Yasui patent. Thus, Applicant believes that the Yasui patent does not disclose or suggest the arrangement of claims 1 and 7, whether singularly or in combination with the Sato patent.

Matsuda Patent

The Office Action on page 10 asserts that the inclined surface of the fixed shaft cover is the first recessed portion, and the line slider 21 is the second recessed portion. It is not clear which structure of the Matsuda patent the Office Action considers to be the conical portion and the cylindrical portion. Applicant believes, however, that the Matsuda patent does not show the structure of claims 1 and 7 as now amended.

More specifically, claims 1 and 7 as currently amended clearly require that the first recessed portion be *formed where the conical portion meets the cylindrical portion and recessed relative to the second recessed portion and the cylindrical portion*. Clearly, the portion that the Office Action asserts is the first recessed portion actually corresponds to the cylindrical portion of claims 1 and 7. Also, it is clear from the disclosure of the Matsuda patent that there is no showing or suggestion of any recessed portion corresponding to the first recessed portion, which must be recessed relative to the second recessed portion and the cylindrical portion. Accordingly, the Matsuda patent does not show or suggest any structure that corresponds to the first recessed portion of claims 1 and 7 as now amended.

Therefore, Applicant believes that the Matsuda patent does not disclose or suggest the arrangement of claims 1 and 7, whether singularly or in combination with the Sato patent and the Yasui patent.

Sugawara Patent

The Office Action on page 11 asserts that the voids 11d that are formed on opposite sides of the stationary shaft cover 11 of the Sugawara patent correspond to the first and second recessed portions. Clearly, the Sugawara patent does not show or suggest the first and second recessed portions as defined in now-amended claims 1 and 7. As stated above, claims 1 and 7 as presented above require that the first recessed portion be *recessed relative to the second recessed portion and the cylindrical portion*. In the Sugawara patent, however, the first and second recessed portions are opposite each other. More specifically, the first recessed portion of the Sugawara patent is *not* recessed relative to the second recessed portion. This is clearly contrary to the requirements of claims 1 and 7 as now amended.

Therefore, Applicant believes that the Sugawara patent does not disclose or suggest the arrangement of claims 1 and 7, whether singularly or in combination with the Sato patent, the Yasui patent, and the Matsuda patent.

Dependent Claims

Claims 2-3 and 8-9 are canceled. Thus, rejections to these claims are now moot. Applicant also believes that remaining dependent claims 4-6 and 10-12 are also allowable over the prior art of record since they depend from independent claims 1 and 7 and therefore are allowable for the reasons stated above. Since the prior art of record does not anticipate the independent claims 1 and 7, neither does the prior art anticipate dependent claims 4-6 and 10-12.

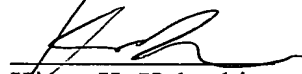
In view of the above comments, Applicant respectfully requests withdrawal of the rejections.

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In view of the foregoing amendment and comments, Applicant respectfully asserts that claims 1, 4-7, and 10-12 are now in condition for allowance. Reexamination and reconsideration of the pending claims are respectfully requested.

Appl. No. 10/647,537
Amendment dated December 15, 2004
Reply to Office Action of May 5, 2004

Respectfully submitted,



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Dated: Dec 15, 2004

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